

American

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United States, South Korea Will Review, Reaffirm Alliance	1
United States Aims To Preserve Peace, Stability in Taiwan Strait	2
State's Welch Offers Cautious Optimism on Lebanon Cease-fire.....	2
U.S. Supports Japan as Permanent Member of U.N. Security Council	3
U.S. Official Outlines Essential Elements of Democracy	4
Iraqi, Coalition Troops Confront "Active Insurgency" in Al-Anbar	5
U.S. Treasury Secretary Casts U.S.-China Relations as Opportunity	6

United States, South Korea Will Review, Reaffirm Alliance

President Roh Moo-hyun meeting with Secretary Rice, President Bush in Washington

By Jane Morse

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun will discuss a variety of issues and reaffirm their countries' bilateral alliance during Roh's two-day visit to Washington September 13-14.

Roh's schedule includes talks with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Paulson, as well as a stop at Capitol Hill to meet with U.S. congressional leaders on September 13. Roh will meet with President Bush at the White House September 14.

In a background briefing September 12 at the Foreign Press Center in Washington, a senior U.S. official said this will be the sixth meeting between the two leaders.

"There have been many, many achievements in this alliance during the presidencies of these two leaders," the official said. "Whether you're talking about commitments in Iraq, the global War on Terror, [realignment of U.S. forces in Korea], reducing troop levels, base relocation -- there are a lot of good things that one can point to in terms of the alliance."

High on the agenda for the Roh-Bush meeting is the U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement, which, among other things, would establish time frames for the phase-out of tariffs on agricultural and industrial goods, textiles and pharmaceuticals.

South Korea is a major economic partner for the United States. In 2004, two-way trade between the countries was more than \$70 billion, making South Korea the United States' seventh-largest trading partner and its seventh-largest export market.

SIX-PARTY TALKS

Another priority topic will be the Six-Party Talks aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula. The talks involve the United States, North and South Korea, China, Japan and Russia.

After intensive negotiations, Pyongyang signed a joint statement of principles on September 19, 2005, making a commitment to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, to return to the nonproliferation treaty on nuclear weapons and to reinstate safeguards of the

International Atomic Energy Agency.

A subsequent round of talks in November 2005 ended inconclusively, and since that time the North Korean regime has refused to return to the table to discuss implementation.

"We don't believe the talks have failed," the senior official said, adding that the White House remains committed. "I think every party remains committed to the talks, and now it's incumbent on the North to come back."

Pyongyang's decision to test launch seven missiles in July, however, was seen as "a threat and a real provocation," the U.S. official said. The tests included several Scud-type and Nodong short- to medium-range missiles capable of reaching Japan and a Taepodong-2 long-range missile believed capable of reaching U.S. soil in Alaska.

The official said the missile tests triggered the U.N. Security Council unanimously to adopt Resolution 1695. The resolution demands that North Korea suspend all activities related to its ballistic missile program, requires U.N. member states to refrain from trading with North Korea on missile-related goods and technology, and urges North Korea to return immediately and without preconditions to the Six-Party Talks.

As part of the evolving military relationship between the United States and South Korea, the official said, the two countries have been working on a "road map" laying out plans to transfer wartime command of South Korea's armed forces back to Seoul. Asked about a potential timetable for the transfer, the official acknowledged that the issue has been "hugely controversial" in South Korea.

Nonetheless, the topic will not generate specific discussion between Bush and Roh, the official said, adding that military officials and commanders on the ground would discuss terms for an agreement.

"This is something that the Department of Defense and the Ministry of National Defense will work out and there will be a meeting in October in which these sorts of issues will be discussed," the official said.

A joint statement is not anticipated from this meeting between Roh and Bush, the official said, noting that a statement released following the November 17, 2005, meeting between the two leaders in Gyeongju, South Korea, remains "the definitive statement" for bilateral relations.

United States Aims To Preserve Peace, Stability in Taiwan Strait

State's coordinator for Taiwan policy urges dialogue between China, Taiwan

By Peggy B. Hu

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States has "an abiding interest" in the preservation of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, according to Clifford A. Hart Jr., director of the State Department's Office of Taiwan Coordination.

In remarks at the U.S.-Taiwan Business Council Defense Industry Conference in Denver September 12, Hart said U.S. policy toward Taiwan is based on the principle that war between China and Taiwan remains possible, if unlikely.

"China refuses to renounce the use of force against Taiwan, even as any such use of force would be a disaster for people on both sides of the Strait, the region, and America itself," he said.

The United States urges China "to demonstrate more military transparency, to cease its arms buildup opposite Taiwan, and to reduce its armed threat to Taiwan," Hart said.

"At the same time," he continued, "we assign special importance to [Taiwan] President Chen's June 8, 2006, public reaffirmation of his commitments that Taiwan will not declare independence, change the national name, push for sovereignty themes in the constitution, or promote a referendum to change the status quo."

"The United States does not support Taiwan independence and opposes unilateral changes to the status quo by either side," Hart said. "We urge all parties to avoid confrontational or provocative acts, and we believe the future of Taiwan should be resolved peacefully."

The State Department official expressed concern about China's military buildup, which he said is targeted against Taiwan.

Citing an annual report produced by the U.S. Department of Defense, Hart said the buildup "risks disrupting the status quo" as China's military expansion creates "a capabilities gap."

In response to China's actions, he continued, the United States "has substantially boosted its defense cooperation with Taipei and taken steps to maintain its own capabilities should the President choose to respond militarily to any use of force or coercion against Taiwan."

Under the Taiwan Relations Act, passed in 1979, the United States provides Taiwan defensive capabilities. The act, along with three joint communiqués issued between 1972 and 1982 that recognize the People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate government of China and state Taiwan is part of China, govern U.S.-China relations.

Although the United States remains committed to helping Taiwan defend itself, Taiwan also must do its part, Hart said.

The State Department official urged Taiwan's leaders to "engage in a serious deliberation on security and exercise wisdom and political courage in agreeing to fund urgently needed increases in Taiwan's self-defense capabilities."

Ultimately, Hart remained positive regarding the resolution of the situation in the Taiwan Strait.

"By embracing freedom at all levels, Taiwan has delivered prosperity to its people and created a free and democratic Chinese society. In so doing, it has set a hopeful example for the region and the world," Hart said. "Given these advantages, and my country's rock solid support for Taiwan's security, I am optimistic about the preservation of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait over the long term."

State's Welch Offers Cautious Optimism on Lebanon Cease-fire

Says "substantial tools" available to achieve a permanent, sustainable cease-fire

By Lea Terhune

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- In what he characterized as "a summer of stress and hardship," Assistant Secretary of State C. David Welch told U.S. senators he sees U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701 as a vital tool for permanently stabilizing Lebanon.

"What was needed here was not a precipitate rush to a cease-fire, but an effort to build a cease-fire on a more permanent and sustainable basis," one that would prevent a return to conditions that allowed the outbreak of hostilities in the first place. "One can't be complacent and allow this to recur," Welch said during his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee September 13 during a hearing on securing a permanent cease-fire in Lebanon.

The provisions of Resolution 1701 open up an unprecedented opportunity, he said, with new, "substantial tools." The arms embargo against unauthorized groups in

Lebanon, the creation of a strong international force to support the Lebanese army in its deployment throughout the country, and other mechanisms to help the Lebanese government establish sovereignty are significant measures that will contribute to sustained peace, Welch said.

"These new rules would change the situation in Lebanon and in the region ... significantly for the better and would more than meet our standard of 'no return to the status quo ante,'" he said.

Of the enhanced United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) Welch said: "The new UNIFIL is nothing like the old UNIFIL. It has a completely new concept of operations and rules of engagement." This includes armed troops, combat battalions from NATO members and a maritime surveillance role for NATO-affiliated navies. It is the first time UNIFIL has a maritime mission, and the lack of it in the past left Lebanon's coastline unprotected and vulnerable to smuggling of weapons to unauthorized militias.

He said there are about 9,000 troop commitments with more commitments expected. "Over 3,000 fresh troops are on the ground, and more arriving every day," he said. A robust force is required to make the land border secure, help enforce the arms embargo and assist in disarming militias, particularly Hezbollah.

"The international response so far to the needs of Lebanon has been impressive," he said. "It's necessary to distinguish between what has been delivered and what has been promised, and to emphasize the urgency of delivering on the promise," he said, adding that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is trying "to show some delivery."

Welch said nearly \$60 million of the promised \$230 million in aid pledged by the United States has been spent on humanitarian aid. In response to a question by Senator Chuck Hegel, he said about \$40 million is earmarked for security assistance. The Lebanese army is U.S.-equipped, and there are plans for training and assistance to internal security forces. Other funds will be used for repair of destroyed bridges, schools, homes and other infrastructure. The United States is helping to clean up the oil spill that occurred during the conflict and plans "to help the fishermen who were affected by the incident." Funds also are going toward removal of unexploded ordnance.

Welch praised the government of Lebanon in its effort to change the balance of authority and power in the country: "The government led by Fuad Siniora, beset with as many difficulties as it was before, during and after this crisis, has done a truly remarkable job in addressing it."

In response to questions about the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Welch said the United States has been working to relax movement and access restrictions placed by Israel in and around Gaza and has succeeded in getting Israel to allow humanitarian aid shipments. He reiterated the U.S. commitment to the peace process. "We would like to see conversations, even negotiations, restart between Israel and the legitimate part of the [Palestinian Authority] just as soon as possible."

Acknowledging the difficulty of peacekeeping inherent in the region, he maintained that with international cooperation and persistence, stable peace in Lebanon is possible. "We will continue our effort to support moderate governments, like that of Lebanon, which has been democratically elected, in order to help meet the needs of the Lebanese people and allow their freedom to take real root inside this country," Welch said.

U.S. Supports Japan as Permanent Member of U.N. Security Council

State's Silverberg says council expansion should be modest and have consensus

By Stephen Kaufman

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States strongly supports the addition of Japan as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council and believes its inclusion would increase the council's effectiveness in addressing threats to peace and security around the world.

In a September 13 USINFO webchat with questioners from around the world, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Kristen Silverberg said Japan is the second-largest donor to the United Nations and "has been an important and active supporter of U.N. activities."

She also told the Washington File in a September 12 interview that Japan would be "an enormously positive addition" to the council, given the country's active involvement "across the board," in U.N. activities, including humanitarian, peacekeeping and development issues.

"They're a responsible player in the international community and in committees. They share our values in promoting democracy and protecting human rights," she said.

Silverberg said the United States is generally open to expanding the Security Council with a broad consensus in

the General Assembly, but believes expansion should be modest.

"The council has so much to do and we've seen how relevant the council is in the past year dealing with North Korea and Darfur and now we're asking it deal with Burma, with Iran and Lebanon and a full range of issues. And so we don't want the council to be unmanageable. We need it to stay the size where it can take effective action," she said.

In a webchat that previewed the 61st General Debate of the U.N. General Assembly, Silverberg said President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice plan to discuss "the full range of foreign policy challenges," with their counterparts from around the world. She specifically mentioned the human rights crisis in Burma, U.N. management reform, challenges in the Middle East, and ways in which the international community "can work together to ensure that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon."

In light of Iran's continued refusal to suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities, Silverberg said the Security Council "should now proceed to adopt a sanctions resolution."

She expressed the Bush administration's desire for the council to act "as soon as possible" on the issue, and said formal discussions between the five permanent members and Germany on a possible resolution began September 7 in Berlin.

Silverberg also welcomed the international response to President Bush's 2004 proposal for a U.N. Democracy Fund that would support emerging democracies through technical assistance.

"The United States has been glad to see so many countries rally behind President Bush's proposal," she said, adding that the fund was launched in 2005 along with an advisory board that includes the United States.

According to the assistant secretary, the advisory board has received more than 1,300 grant proposals from more than 100 countries so far, and has selected 125 projects that will receive the first set of grants in 2006.

"The United States is pleased with this progress and will continue to work hard to strengthen U.N. democracy efforts," she said.

U.S. Official Outlines Essential Elements of Democracy

John Maisto says democracy must defend human liberties

By Eric Green

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The Organization of American States (OAS), on behalf of the 800 million people in the Western Hemisphere, must be committed to defending democracy in the region, says U.S. official John Maisto.

In September 12 remarks at the OAS commemorating the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, Maisto said the charter enumerates the "essential elements of representative democracy."

Maisto, the U.S. permanent representative to the OAS, said those elements of democracy are respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; the rule of law; the holding of periodic, free and fair elections based on secret balloting; a pluralistic political system; and the separation of powers between branches of government.

He also emphasized that the "democracy we are talking about is not a U.S. model of democracy," nor a model of democracy from Brazil, Canada, Venezuela, Costa Rica or Jamaica. The elements of democracy, he said, represent "fundamental, universal, non-negotiable human liberties. And in the Americas, we have a positive agenda to assure that all 800 million people enjoy these freedoms."

The U.S. envoy said that if democracy is to help reduce poverty and inequality in the Americas, "then democratic institutions must be effective. Institutions must be reformed to fight corruption and to function transparently. And every democracy must have the strength to create opportunities for improved health and education for all of its citizens."

Maisto said that "to prevent a breakdown of this democratic infrastructure," the Democratic Charter, adopted by the United States and the 33 other OAS members on September 11, 2001, "must be a relevant tool for action, not just a piece of paper."

On that date, when the United States was attacked by terrorists and citizens of more than 30 countries in the hemisphere were killed, hemispheric leaders committed themselves "not only to defend our territory, our security, and our people," but also to defend democracy, said Maisto.

He added that under the auspices of the charter, the OAS has helped or is helping those member states where democratic practices or institutions are challenged, including in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela. In addition, Maisto said that

over the last 24 months, the OAS has fielded "high quality, successful election observer missions or other missions" in Bolivia, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, the Dominican Republic, Panama, El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, St. Vincent, Suriname and Nicaragua.

Maisto said that even though the charter can serve as an effective tool to "ward off political crises or impending challenges to constitutional order, there is still reluctance on the part of some countries to use it in this way."

With this in mind, Maisto said the charter does not "anticipate rushing to sanction or to suspend" an OAS member state. Rather, he said, the charter "contemplates a gradual, measured response to political crises" and "incorporates very practical measures -- both remedial and preventive -- to strengthen and restore democracy."

Maisto said the two 9/11 events -- the terrorist attacks on the United States and the adoption of the charter -- are "seminal in the course of our hemisphere's history, and they will forever remain tied inextricably by fate's hand." He added that "at face value, both could not be further apart in their human dimensions: one, an act of premeditated evil, the other, a symbol of great human achievement that exalts civilization."

But on that date, Maisto said, "we saw our countries, our region, and our world come together as a community of nations to provide comfort, solidarity, and hope. And we saw political will and determination by each one of our governments to make a historic and explicit commitment to the preservation and promotion of democracy, on the very day that our democratic values and way of life came under attack."

Iraqi, Coalition Troops Confront "Active Insurgency" in Al-Anbar

Effective governance, economic development needed, says coalition commander

By David McKeeby

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Coalition and Iraqi forces are making progress to stabilize the country's restive al-Anbar province, but more political and economic progress is needed to undercut the continuing influence of violent militants in the region, says the commander of Multinational Division – West.

"There is an active insurgency in al-Anbar," Marine Corps Major General Richard C. Zilmer told journalists in a September 12 teleconference from Fallujah, Iraq. "The

enemy we face has no concern for the welfare of the Iraqi people, nor any peaceful vision for their future."

The general's comments come in the wake of media reports referencing a classified assessment by his top intelligence officer of ongoing violence in al-Anbar, which reportedly concluded that political and security conditions in the province are deteriorating rapidly.

Zilmer declined to comment specifically on the contents of the still classified document, but said that news outlets had mischaracterized the nature of the report by failing to "accurately capture the entirety and complexity of the current situation in the al-Anbar province of Iraq."

Since February, Zilmer has commanded 30,000 coalition troops stationed in the 85,800 square kilometer province, which extends from just outside the capital, Baghdad, to the country's borders with Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

The desert province's 1.4 million residents are predominately Sunni Arabs who are concentrated in the cities of Falluja and Qaim and the provincial capital, Ramadi. Al-Anbar's citizens account for less than 5 percent of Iraq's population, but their support for the new Iraq is important to realizing the vision of a unity government.

Al-Anbar's porous border and high unemployment and the uncertainty about Iraq's future among some area residents have helped to make it a major stronghold for the Sunni insurgency, comprised of former Ba'athists who regularly target security forces and others supporting the country's democratic government.

Foreign terrorist groups, such as al-Qaida in Iraq, also have taken advantage of the province's instability and its proximity to the country's borders to establish a conduit for weapons and terrorists into the country.

The coalition's primary mission in al-Anbar, Zilmer said, is to provide training and operational support for Iraqi army and national police units. Thanks to successful recruiting efforts to build the province's local police forces and the growing capability of the Iraqi army to execute effective security operations, Iraqi and coalition forces are making "steady progress" improving security conditions across the province.

Despite some improvement in security conditions in the province's major cities, Zilmer acknowledged that al-Anbar has found efforts to form effective local governments, to restore basic services and to promote economic development challenging.

In the long run, he said, the war will not be won on

battlefield, but rather by rejecting sectarian violence, coming together in the spirit of political compromise at the national, provincial, and local levels to effectively serve Iraqi citizens."

"These are the conditions which must be set that will result in the support of the local people, and ultimately cause the defeat of this terrorist backed insurgency," according to a prepared statement released before the teleconference, "Only then will the people of al-Anbar be able to realize their goal of long-term security, prosperity and confidence in their government."

U.S. Treasury Secretary Casts U.S.-China Relations as Opportunity

Paulson calls on China to advance reforms in own, global interest
By Andrzej Zwaniecki
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson says the U.S.-China relationship must be recognized as a long-term, strategic opportunity with huge potential benefits for both nations rather than a threat.

"We are not afraid of Chinese competition," he said. "We welcome it."

The Treasury secretary said the U.S.-China relationship demands a "long-term strategic engagement on our common issues of interest" and warned against protectionism in both countries. Paulson made his remarks at the Treasury Department September 13 to set the stage for his trip to China the following week.

Paulson, who presented himself as an "outspoken advocate" for free and fair trade, said the two countries have many mutual economic interests, including energy and protection of the environment.

"The biggest risk we face is not that China will overtake the United States but that China will not move ahead with the reforms necessary to sustain its growth," he said.

Paulson said China needs to pursue further economic reforms to assert the role of a global economic leader and avoid a protectionist backlash in other countries. He praised Beijing for engineering "one of the most dramatic transformations in world economic history."

Now, he said, China faces a "daunting" challenge of completing the transition from a managed to market economy.

"[Future] growth will depend on raising productivity, which ... will require markets to allocate capital as opposed to administrative decisions," he said.

To assure continued economic expansion, Paulson said, China needs to modernize its financial sector, open its capital markets and move toward production aimed more at local consumption than for export.

He said a "much more flexible, market-driven" exchange rate and a "more nimble, self-determined" monetary policy must be an essential part of this effort.

Paulson said that China's rigid exchange-rate policy is increasingly viewed as a "symbol of unfair competition" and that Chinese authorities who underestimate this reaction do so "at China's own peril."

U.S. and European officials, lawmakers and labor union leaders have criticized Beijing for undermining their countries' manufacturing sectors by flooding their markets with products made relatively cheaply by an artificially low exchange rate.

In 2005, Beijing abandoned its long-standing policy of pegging its currency -- the yuan -- to the U.S. dollar at the fixed rate and instead pegged the yuan to a basket of currencies, allowing it to fluctuate within a narrow band. This move has failed, however, to mollify critics.

Paulson said China's economic policies affect other countries, and an economic crisis or significant slowdown in China would weaken the global economy.

He said the United States has a huge stake in a prosperous and stable China -- a China "able and willing" to accept co-responsibility for maintaining the health of global economic and financial systems.

By pursuing further reforms, Paulson said, China will send a clear signal that it is ready to do just that and will dampen rising anti-Chinese protectionist sentiments.

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